

CLAIMS

The invention is claimed as follows:

1. A portable landscape/construction material blowing unit comprising:
5 a base;
a material hopper supported by the base, the hopper including an opening sized and positioned to receive a supply of material directly and manually from an operator;
a hose extending from the hopper, the hose including a distal end through which material exits the hose;
10 a blower supported by the base and connected fluidly to the hopper, the blower operable to force air through the hopper and material through the hose; and
wherein the base, hose, hopper and blower are configured and arranged to be transported: (i) by a car trailer, truck trailer, garden tractor trailer; (ii) on stakes of a stake bed truck; (iii) by a three point hitch; (iv) by a forklift; (v) by a skid steer loader
15 and any combination thereof.
2. The portable unit of Claim 1, which includes a power supply device supported by the base, the power supply device operable to run the blower.
- 20 3. The portable unit of Claim 2, wherein the power supply device additionally powers a motor that operates a feeder.
4. The portable unit of Claim 3, wherein the power supply device is an engine that is mechanically coupled to the blower and hydraulically coupled to the feeder motor.
- 25 5. The portable unit of Claim 1, which includes a feeder that receives material from the hopper and air from the blower.
6. The portable unit of Claim 5, wherein the feeder is integral to the hopper.
- 30 7. The portable unit of Claim 5, wherein the feeder is located at a bottom portion of the hopper and the hose extends from the hopper at a position below the feeder.

8. The portable unit of Claim 5, wherein the hose extends from a side portion of the hopper.
- 5 9. The portable unit of Claim 1, which includes a device configured to receive a pressurized supply of fluid, the fluid used to power the blower.
10. The portable unit of Claim 9, wherein the fluid is used to power a motor connected mechanically to the blower.
- 10 11. The portable unit of Claim 9, wherein the fluid is used additionally to power a motor that operates a feeder.
12. The portable feeder of Claim 1, wherein the hopper has a material capacity of
15 about three to ten cubic feet.
13. The portable feeder of Claim 1, wherein the hopper, blower and hose are operable to blow a material selected from the group consisting of: bark, mulch, fertilizer, compost, wood chips, soil, peat moss, gypsum, dry grass clippings, leaves,
20 seed, herbicides, pesticides or other chemicals, gravel/stone, processed straw and hay, sawdust and any combination thereof.
14. The portable feeder of Claim 1, which includes an auger positioned inside the hopper, the auger operating to push material towards a position on the hopper that
25 communicates fluidly with the hose.
15. The portable feeder of Claim 1, wherein the base defines at least two apertures sized and positioned to receive forks of a fork lift or skid steer loader.
- 30 16. The portable feeder of Claim 1, which is reversible to alleviate a jam caused by the material.

17. A portable landscape/construction material blowing unit comprising:
a base;
a material hopper supported by the base, the hopper having a material capacity of about three to ten cubic feet;
- 5 a hose extending from the hopper, the hose including a distal end through which material exists the hose;
a blower supported by the base and connected fluidly to the hopper, the blower operable to force air through the hopper and material through the hose; and
a power supply device supported by the base, the power supply device operable
- 10 to run the blower.
18. The portable unit of Claim 17, wherein the base, hopper, hose, blower and power supply device are configured and arranged to be transported: (i) by a car trailer, truck trailer, garden tractor trailer; (ii) on stakes of a stake bed truck; (iii) by a three
- 15 point hitch; (iv) by a forklift and any combination thereof.
19. The portable unit of Claim 17, which includes a feeder that receives material from the hopper and air from the blower.
- 20 20. The portable unit of Claim 19, wherein the feeder is integral to the hopper.
21. The portable feeder of Claim 17, wherein the hopper, blower and hose are operable to blow a material selected from the group consisting of: bark, mulch, fertilizer, compost, wood chips, soil, peat moss, gypsum, dry grass clippings, leaves,
- 25 seed, herbicides, pesticides or other chemicals, gravel/stone, processed straw and hay, sawdust and any combination thereof.
22. A portable landscape/construction material blowing unit comprising:
a base;
- 30 a material hopper supported by the base, the hopper having a material capacity of about three to ten cubic feet;

a hose extending from the hopper, the hose including a distal end with a device for allowing and disallowing flow of material from the hose;

a blower supported by the base and connected fluidly to the hopper, the blower operable to force air through the hopper and material through the hose; and

5 a device configured to receive a pressurized supply of fluid, the fluid used to power the blower.

23. The portable unit of Claim 22, wherein the base, hopper, hose, blower and device are configured and arranged to be transported: (i) by a car trailer, truck trailer,
10 garden tractor trailer; (ii) on stakes of a stake bed truck; (iii) by a three point hitch; (iv) by a forklift; (v) by a skid steer loader and any combination thereof.

24. The portable unit of Claim 22, which includes a feeder that receives material from the hopper and air from the blower.

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25. The portable unit of Claim 24, wherein the feeder is integral to the hopper.

26. The portable blower of Claim 22, wherein the pressurized fluid receiving device includes a pneumatic valve.

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27. The portable feeder of Claim 22, wherein the hopper, blower and hose are operable to blow a material selected from the group consisting of: bark, mulch, fertilizer, compost, wood chips, soil, peat moss, gypsum, dry grass clippings, leaves, seed, herbicides, pesticides or other chemicals, gravel/stone, processed straw and hay,
25 sawdust and any combination thereof.

28. A landscaping/building material feed hopper comprising:

a shell defining a first opening through which dispensable material is supplied, a second opening through which air is blown and a third opening through which the
30 material is conveyed to a hose;

a feeder positioned at an end of the shell opposite and end defining the first opening, the feeder including paddles that move the material towards the third opening;

5 a baffle positioned inside the shell and operating to separate air entering through the second opening and material loaded through the first opening; and
at least one seal between the paddles and an inner surface of the shell.

10 29. The hopper of Claim 28, which includes additionally at least one seal between the paddles and the baffle.

30. The hopper of Claim 28, which includes at least one seal attached to each paddle that seals substantially the paddles to the inner surface of the shell and substantially the paddles to the baffle when the baffles contact the baffle.

15 31. The hopper of Claim 28, which includes a motor that drives the feeder.

32. The hopper of Claim 31, which includes an auger positioned within the interior of the shell, the auger driven by the feeder motor.

20 33. The hopper of Claim 28, wherein the baffle is welded at its sides to the interior surface of the shell so as to form an air chamber within the shell.

25 34. The hopper of Claim 33, wherein the air chamber is positioned adjacent to the feeder so that air in the chamber is forced to contact material being moved by the feeder.

30 35. The hopper of Claim 33, wherein the air chamber is positioned adjacent to the feeder at a position substantially in line with the third opening located on the opposite side of the feeder from the chamber.

36. The hopper of Claim 33, wherein the paddles rotate in a substantially horizontal plane about a substantially vertical axis of rotation.

37. A pneumatic material blowing method comprising the steps of:
providing a unit including a material feed hopper, a pneumatic blower and a feeder having collectively an empty weight suitable so that the unit is transportable via
5 a device selected from the group consisting of: a car trailer, a truck trailer, a garden tractor trailer, stakes of a stake bed truck, a three point hitch, a forklift, a skid steer loader and any combination thereof; and
urging a person to move the unit via the device to a location, load the hopper with material and pneumatically spray the material to a destination.
- 10 38. The method of Claim 37, which includes coupling the blower operably to the hopper.
39. The method of Claim 37, which includes coupling the feeder integrally to the
15 hopper.
40. The method of Claim 37, which includes providing an on-board engine to run the blower and feeder.
- 20 41. The method of Claim 37, which includes urging the person to connect the unit to an external power supply device to run the blower and feeder.
42. A method of dispensing landscaping/building materials to a destination comprising the steps of:
25 moving a unit having a material feed hopper, a pneumatic blower and a feeder via a separate transportation device coupled removably to the unit to a place proximate to the destination;
loading the materials into the hopper;
manually conveying a hose from the unit to the destination; and
30 powering the unit and manipulating the hose so that the material is dispensed to the destination.

43. The method of Claim 42, which includes coupling the transportation device removably to the unit via: a hitch, loading and the securing the unit onto the device, forks of a fork lift/skid steer loader or any combination thereof.

5 44. The method of Claim 42, which includes a first person loading the materials while a second person manipulates the hose.

45. The method of Claim 42, which includes a person loading the materials at a first time and manipulating the hose at a second time.